
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 43 (File 420, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES STATUTES.

SUMMARY:

This bill allows the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner, within available appropriations, to provide funds to foster or prospective adoptive families to make home modifications to safely accommodate a foster child with physical disabilities. The commissioner or her designee must determine the type of modification and amount of funds to provide, taking into account the family's available income and resources. DCF may modify, suspend, or discontinue the funds at any time.

This bill prohibits the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner from awarding a child care subsidy under the Care 4 Kids program to anyone who already received a child care subsidy from DCF for the same child during the same time period for which he or she is seeking the Care 4 Kids subsidy (see BACKGROUND).

The bill conforms the law to current DCF practice by eliminating references to certified relative caregivers, an obsolete term. DCF stopped certifying relative caregivers approximately 10 years ago when the federal government began requiring all caregivers to be licensed to be eligible for federal foster care and adoption services reimbursement.

The bill replaces obsolete references to the "differential response" program with the "family assessment response" program. PA 13-54 renamed the DCF differential response program the family assessment response program.

The bill also makes other minor, technical, and conforming changes.

*Senate Amendment "A" prohibits DSS from awarding a Care 4 Kids subsidy to someone for the same time period during which he or she already received a child care subsidy for the same child from DCF.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014, except for the Care 4 Kids subsidy provision, which is effective July 1, 2014, and two provisions that make minor technical changes, which are effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND

Care 4 Kids

By law, DSS, within available appropriations, offers child care subsidies through the Care 4 Kids program to working families with incomes under 50% of the state median income (SMI) and certain other qualified recipients. Currently, a family of three with income under \$43,333 per year qualifies. Once eligible, family income can rise to 75% of SMI, which for a family of three would be \$64,999 annually. Different eligibility rules apply for DCF adoptive parents and temporary family assistance recipients.

Legislative History

The original bill (File 25) was referred to the Human Services Committee, which reported it with a joint favorable substitute on March 31. The substitute language deleted provisions related to repaying home modification funds to DCF and authorizing DCF to place a lien on the home. It also deleted a provision that repealed certain DCF reporting requirements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 8 Nay 4 (03/04/2014)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 17 Nay 0 (03/31/2014)

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 7 (04/14/2014)